

PARTNERSHIP RELATIONS IN FAIR TRADE TOURISM

**ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET
FOR PROFESSIONALS**



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INTRODUCTION

The Association for Fair and Solidarity Tourism (ATES)

The ATES is a professional network of specialists in fair and solidarity tourism. Created in 2006, it brings together nearly 35 travel agencies, tourism operators in France and associate members. Today, its main missions are:

- **To guarantee** the practices of tourism organizations committed to fair and solidarity tourism by issuing the Fair Tourism label;
- **To support** the professionalization of its members and the structuring of the fair and solidarity tourism offer in the destinations;
- **To disseminate** the values and practices of fair and solidarity tourism among institutions and the tourism sector in France;
- **To raise awareness** among travellers of the challenges of fair and solidarity tourism.



And what about the Fair Tourism Label?

Since 2014, the ATES has defined, led and issued the Fair Tourism label, which guarantees the practices of tour operators, incoming agencies and tourist offices. Based on a reference framework of 30 criteria, the label guarantees:

- A relationship with partners in destinations based on fair trade principles
- Concrete commitments to local development
- An activity rooted in the territory and beneficial to the inhabitants

AN ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET

→ FOR WHO?

This booklet is intended for anyone interested in fair tourism and in particular tourism professionals. 11 photos with their accompanying texts provide a better understanding of how Fair Trade Tourism stays are organised.



**FIND ALL THE STRUCTURES AND OFFERS
CERTIFIED FAIR TOURISM ON:**

WWW.TOURISME-EQUITABLE.ORG

→ HOW?

This booklet is the result of a study conducted in 2024 that has collected many lessons learned around partnership approaches between:

→ The following Fair-Trade Tourism certified travel agencies:

- A'Tibo Timon
- Endallah,
- Grandir Aventure /Grandes Latitudes,
- ICD-Afrique,
- Rencontres au Bout du Monde,
- TDS Voyage,
- Terres des Andes /Les Nouvelles Terres
- Vision du Monde.

→ Their local partners: incoming agencies, community based structures, NGOs...

Thank you to the contributors, from 13 different countries*, who participated in this study.

[*] Benin, Cape Verde, Cuba, Ecuador, France, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Peru and Tanzania.

AXIS 1

**IDENTIFYING YOUR PARTNERS: KNOWING
EACH OTHER, UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER,
AGREEING ON COMMON PRACTICES AND VALUES**



What does this photograph say?

Tour operators first focus on identifying players who **do not benefit** or only slightly from the manna of mass tourism.

To identify them, in the destinations already known, existing partners are best placed as resource persons. The existence of a project can also be reported by an NGO that supports communities, for example on fair trade actions **based on local initiative**.

The tour operator and the partner then ensure that a **minimum base of common values** is shared, either through remote discussions or directly on site. The shared values that come up most often, symbolized by these hands that are tied, are: solidarity, honesty, respect, trust etc.

Each stakeholder also mobilizes **affect and intuition** in the choice of these partners.

IN SENEGAL, WITH ICD-AFRIQUE

Links are forged between partners, host communities, and travellers.



What does this photograph say?

The majority of the partners are either incoming agencies, local communities or associations. And "it's always a story of encounters", as one of the tour operators said, and like this moment of sharing in Madagascar.

When discussing with the aim of developing a common tourist offer, tour operators opt for certain minimum conditions, before committing to consolidating the relationship with the local partner:

- **Language:** some operators explicitly prefer to work with French-speaking people to facilitate exchanges, others do not.
- Compliance with the specifications of the **Fair Tourism label**
- The requirements related to the **reception** of customers (hygiene, safety, etc.).

At the beginning, the tour operator must be particularly aware of its position in the eyes of the local partners: in bringing about a revenue-generating partnership, it must be careful not to create **self-censorship** or an **absence of contradictions** on the part of the actors on the ground.

IN MADAGASCAR, WITH GRANDIR AVENTURE / GRANDES LATITUDES

In Antsirabe, meeting with the local association.

AXIS 2

ENSURING A LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP: MAKING A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT



What does this photograph say?

The key element contributing to the creation of a lasting partnership relationship is **trust**. This requires the implementation of reciprocal and transparent communication, including with regard to travellers' feedback.

The formalization of a partnership through a **written document** (contract, agreement) is a compulsory practice to define the bases of the collaboration.

The most important thing is the creation of a link between partners without hierarchy, favouring the **human dimension** of the relationship.

This facilitates the **feedback** of information on difficulties, in order to find solutions and improve both the tourism offer and the well-being of all stakeholders.

IN PERU, WITH TERRES DES ANDES / NOUVELLES TERRES

Raul, a guide from Terres des Andes' local partner, warmly thanks Soledad (manager of a community tourism house) for hosting the tour operator, his partners and friends for a few days. They celebrated together their friendship initiated thanks to their partnership.



What does this photograph say?

Establishing and sustaining a partnership over time requires a mutual understanding of the **rhythms** and interests of each party.

Agreeing on these temporalities requires **listening** to the partners' proposals, particularly in relation to their reception capacities. Several tour operators are implementing a **regulation** of the flow of travellers in each village, based on the suggestions of the villagers.

This approach ensures that tourism activities are in harmony with the needs and rhythms of the local community, thus fostering a **balanced** and sustainable relationship.

It is also important to pay particular attention to **the partners... of the partners**. Indeed, the tour operator will sometimes be in contact with a single key person who himself makes the link with the other members of the communities. To **avoid power asymmetries** between partners, the direct meeting of the host persons makes it possible to discuss the human, material and pricing conditions of the partnership.

IN BENIN, WITH A' TIBO TIMON

A local woman teaches a traveller the rhythm of a local dance in Godomey.

FOCUS - GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PARTNERSHIPS



What does this photograph say?

Solidarity tourism can be a factor in women's **emancipation**. The level of commitment depends on the shared vision between partners on these dimensions and the reality of the cultural context in which the trip takes place.

Thus, the inequalities prior to or generated by tourism activity can be avoided or reduced through **several levers**. For example, guides offer **cultural mediation** to bridge the gap between the way in which gender relations structure communities on the one hand, and groups of travellers on the other.

Affirmative action (explicitly favouring women in tourism professions, as in this case Flor) or **direct support** for specific projects for women are other means of significantly reducing gender inequalities.

IN ECUADOR, WITH TDS VOYAGE

In 2008, when the partnership was set up in Ecuador, Flor (pictured on the right), then 18 years old, was designated by her village to be a Spanish-speaking local guide during the travellers' leg in her Andean community. Then in 2012, Flor studied tourism and French and has since become the indispensable certified French-speaking national guide on the entire tour offered by the tour operator.

AXIS 3

SUPPORTING THE PARTNER'S... AND THE TOUR OPERATOR'S SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



What does this photograph say?

Mutual reinforcement is at the heart of the approach promoted by the Fair Tourism Label. Each tour operator has a specific way of meeting this requirement, but they all insist on one point in common: the **reciprocal contribution** - of the partner - through their acute knowledge of the destination areas and their balance, - and of the tour operator - through their mastery of the expectations of its visitors.

Training (reception, security, etc.) supported by fair trade tour operators is important for **capacity building** in communities that are often not used to welcoming travelers from abroad.

It is therefore important that **the trainers come from the countries** concerned, while avoiding the application of a top-down methodology. Here, the trainer rightly favours a posture of exchange, at the same level as the villagers and in their living environment.

IN INDIA, WITH RENCONTRES AU BOUT DU MONDE

STraining session on tourist reception with the villagers of Bhinyasar (Thar desert, Rajasthan) by the local partner.



What does this photograph say?

The principle of the Endallah Academy is simple: to reinvest tourism revenues in the training of young people with little or no experience in tourism.

These future guides are apprenticed for a year, alternating between theoretical sessions, French lessons and practical scenarios. In a very **male-dominated sector**, a woman will follow the training in order to be able to hope to inspire other future female guides.

Such a programme is a good example to follow, being aware that it requires the **necessary funding**.

Today, the Endallah Academy is financed directly from its own funds and via the **development fund** (see Axis 5).

Other, more flexible forms of **sharing between peers** (between different foster families, between partners, etc.) are also excellent levers for progressing together!

IN TANZANIA, WITH ENDALLAH

The first class of the Endallah Academy :

Vitalis, Gabriel Yuda, Stella, Ochulnoti, Fanuel, Daniel Kimori, Izak, Deo Jacob, Collins, Bitahilo, Radjabu, Nelson et Iddy.

AXIS 4

COMMITTING TO FAIR REMUNERATION: AGREEING ON FAIR PRICES



What does this photograph say?

In fair and solidarity tourism practices, the price proposal comes from local partners, sometimes through collective consultations as here in Mexico. This amount, **little or not reviewed by the tour operator**, adjusts over time and with the construction of a relationship of trust.

Referring to the criteria of the Fair Trade Tourism label, the prices are **reviewed annually** in the event of socio-economic changes (e.g. inflation), with the aim of improving the living conditions of local partners.

A key to setting and balancing prices is **transparency**. The local partner must also be informed of how the total price of the stay is distributed, thus allowing him to offer a fair price. The tour operator may also suggest that a price that is too high can harm the attractiveness of the stay and lead to an absence of tourists.

Overall, tour operators and partners try to charge prices that are **a little higher** than the conventional tourism market, in order to better remunerate the different people organizing the trips.

IN MEXICO, WITH TDS VOYAGE

The partners of TDS Voyage in Mexico meet in workshops to discuss and reflect on the construction of circuits and activities to be offered to travellers. It is also an opportunity to discuss and set the rates for the various services each year. During these assemblies, the partners share their experiences and make decisions on the future of their organization and the promotion of community-based tourism



IN PERU, WITH TERRES DES ANDES / NOUVELLES TERRES

Indigenous women who have formed an association meet to review the accounts. They note in notebooks the number of tourists received, who welcomed them, the services provided (e.g. meals, workshops). They take advantage of this to ensure a fair distribution of passengers and the setting of a fair price.

What does this photograph say?

Once the conditions of the trip have been defined between the French tour operator and its local partner, the fair trade tour operator makes an **advance payment** to its partner, with the aim of carrying out the planned activities in good conditions.

The involvement of the communities then makes it possible to **distribute the economic benefits** equitably, for example by designating a redistributive person. In practice, tour operators also try to keep the same remuneration for guides, regardless of the number of people in the group welcomed.

The **primacy of human relations** over commercial relations is essential, especially since we should not expect disproportionate remuneration from fair tourism. The latter must remain a complement to other sources of income, for example agricultural or artisanal.

AXIS 5

ENSURING EQUITABLE SHARING OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS



What does this photograph say?

Fatima is from a village in southeastern Morocco. After finishing her university studies, she joined her village's development association as a **volunteer**. In this context, she provided support to the women members of the association for the marketing of local handicraft products.

Subsequently, still within the association, Fatima initiated literacy classes for the women of the village. She has also helped to structure and organize the **marketing** of handicrafts by establishing a link between women producers and young women graduates.

Taking advantage of the tourist attractiveness of the Merzouga region, the association has launched a reflection on fair tourism as a lever to create income-generating activities for the local population and to contribute to sustainable local development.

Fatima, through her commitment to the association, was the main **pivot** that initiated the link and partnership with the French tour operator in the early 2000s. She is still vice-president of her village's development association and ensures that income from tourism is fairly shared among the families in the village.

IN MOROCCO, WITH VISION DU MONDE

Portrait of Fatima, vice-president of a local development association.



What does this photograph say?

All tour operators with the Fair Tourism label participate in a **development fund to support local projects that meet the collective interest**. On average, 4.5% of the price of the stay (excluding air travel) is intended to support such initiatives. This support allows local partners to mobilise other complementary sources of funding.

Tour operators have different practices in identifying the projects to be financed, but all aim to meet a specific demand from the people concerned.

Ideally, the presence of several people within a group, whether or not formalized as an association, makes it possible to ensure on the one hand the **collective dimension** of the supported initiative, and on the other hand an increased presence in the long term for **follow-up**.

While tour operators and their partners prioritize the renovation / construction of infrastructure (schools, drinking water, etc.), other types of initiatives are put in place: "upgrading" of family equipment, micro-credit system, training in tourism professions, etc.

IN BENIN, WITH A' TIBO TIMON

Participation of the villagers of Dikouenteni in the construction of a water tower financed as part of the development fund.

AND TO GO FURTHER...



The complete study and its synthesis



The **video** "How are fair tourism stays constructed?" gives the floor to partners in Morocco and Peru.

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STUDY CARRIED OUT WITH THE SUPPORT OF

